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ABSTRACT

These guidelines present best educational practices designed to assist school districts in providing quality programs for students with severe disabilities. The guidelines are intended to serve as a self-assessment tool for school districts. State-operated programs for Oregon students who are trainable mentally retarded are to use the guidelines to assess their services, and are to identify and prioritize goals for program improvement. The quality guidelines focus on the following areas: age-appropriate placement in local public schools; integrated delivery of special education and related services; social integration; transition planning; functional, longitudinal curricular expectations; community-referenced instruction; systematic data-based instruction; home-school partnership; barrier-free facilities; personnel development; and systematic evaluation of educational and related services. (JDD)

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Guidelines for Programs Serving Students with Severe Handicaps

March 1990

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Foreword

These guidelines were developed by the TMR Working Group to assist districts in providing quality programs for students with severe disabilities. The guidelines are considered best practices and have been reviewed by both Luanna Myers from Syracuse University and the Center for Developmental Disabilities from the University of Vermont.

Each district participating in the state-operated TMR program should use the guidelines to conduct a self-study to compare its current program with recognized best practices. Goals and objectives for program improvement should then be identified along with an action plan to implement strategies for change to better serve students with severe disabilities.

Program improvement is an ongoing activity. As new research and technology become available, new educational strategies and techniques are being identified to teach students in a more effective manner. It is intended that the guidelines will be continually changing to reflect the new developments in the field of special education.

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Background

The guidelines and checklists presented in this document represent an ongoing effort of the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon TMR Working Group, and an Oregon Statewide Systems Change Project. The project is funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education and conducted by the Teaching Research Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education. The primary purpose is to improve the quality of statewide services for students with severe handicaps.

These guidelines were derived from several major sources. The TMR Working Group prepared a draft of guidelines based upon an early version of "Program Quality Indicators: A Checklist of Most Promising Practices in Educational Programs for Students With Disabilities" (Meyer, 1987), developed and validated by Luanna Meyer and others at Syracuse University (Meyer, Eichinger & Park-Lee, in press). This draft was very important because it allowed for input of Oregon educators and parents. Additional guideline information was acquired through the Program Review Oregon Planning Guide for the Education of Deaf-Blind Students completed by the Oregon Working Group for Deaf-Blind Individuals. Staff of the Teaching Research Systems Change Project field-tested the Oregon Working Group Guidelines Draft in Oregon school districts. The Teaching Research staff also field-tested in Oregon school districts the "Best Educational Practices" assessment instrument, developed and validated by Wayne Fox and others at the University of Vermont as part of a statewide systems change project in Vermont.

A cross-reference of the Oregon Working Group Draft and the Vermont document shows overlap for most items in each document. The attached guidelines include all of the overlapping items, some items unique to each document, all items identified by the Oregon Working Group, and a few items added from the latest update of *Program Quality Indicators* (Meyer, 1987). The current document is organized in a manner similar to the document from Vermont. The field tests demonstrated that this organization, by quality characteristics (e.g., age-appropriate public school placement, social integration, curricular expectations, etc.), rather than by components of the program (e.g., program philosophy characteristics, student opportunities for learning, etc.), resulted in less duplication across sections and a clearer picture of program quality characteristics.

It is expected that the specific content of these guidelines will change over time to reflect expanding knowledge in this field.

How to Use This Document

This publication is intended to serve as a self-assessment tool for programs serving school-age students with severe disabilities. The guidelines reflect "best practices" in the field and should be used to measure the quality of services being provided to the targeted population.

All state operated programs for students who are trainable mentally retarded are to use the guidelines to assess the services they are currently providing. Each classroom instructional team, along with the program supervisor and building principal, should complete the guidelines together and discuss the level of implementation and quality of each indicator. This information should then be shared with appropriate administrators.

The Oregon Department of Education maintains that these programs should address guidelines for quality in each of the following areas:

- Age-Appropriate Placement in Local Public Schools
- Integrated Delivery of Special Education and Related Services
- Social Integration
- Transition Planning
- Functional, Longitudinal Curricular Expectations
- Community-Referenced Instruction
- Systematic Data-Based Instruction
- Home-School Partnership
- Barrier-Free Facilities
- Personnel Development
- Systematic Evaluation of Educational and Related Services

For each area of the guidelines a "quality guidelines checklist" has been identified. **Some of these guidelines appear in bold type to identify them as "primary guidelines."** These **primary guidelines** are prerequisites to other, secondary guidelines. To avoid duplication, when a guideline could be attached to more than one area, it was listed under the area to which it most directly relates.

The person(s) completing the quality guidelines checklist will select the one response that best describes at what level the practice is in place. The practice will be in place at one of the following levels: All (100%), Many (75%), Some (50%), Few (25%), No (0%) and Don't Know. The person completing the checklist will select the one of these that best describes or comes closest to the percentage of students/staff for which the practice is in place.

After a review of the completeted guidelines, individual classroom teams should identify areas needing improvement. Any item checked at the 50 percent level or lower should be considered as an area in need of improvement. After listing all indicators that are at or below the 50 percent level, the classroom staff should prioritize and identify goals for program improvement. This information is to be shared with the administrative staff with recommendations as to how to provide each indicator within the current program.

In addition to individual classroom self-assessments, the district should review all data and determine district-wide goals for improvement. To accomplish this, administrative staff should identify common indicators that need improvement across a variety of classrooms. Again, the goals should be prioritized with recommendations as to how to accomplish each goal.

This list of district goals should be forwarded to the Oregon Department of Education TMR Specialist. After reviewing the program goals, the specialist will provide recommendations for technical assistance including trainers, materials, grant information and other possible resources.

Age-Appropriate Placement in Local Public Schools

Placement of students with severe handicaps into chronologically age-appropriate classes within their local school is in the best interest of all students (with or without handicaps), their teachers and families. At the very least, all students should be assigned to a chronologically age-appropriate regular classroom that will serve as a homeroom within their local public school.

The ODE is responsible for ensuring that, to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped. In addition, the ODE must ensure that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with handicaps from the regular educational environment occur only when the nature or the severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. *Least Restrictive Environment 300.550 General*

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The local education agency (LEA) has a written policy for age-appropriate placement in local public schools.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. There is a written district policy describing procedures and safeguards for removal of students from regular classrooms.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. Each student's homeroom placement is an age-appropriate (i.e., + or - 1 or 2 years), regular classroom in their local school.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. Regular classroom teachers are involved in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) development for each student.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. For each student there is written justification for any removal from the regular program.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Part-time or full-time placement outside the regular classroom is based upon specific needs, as identified in the student's IEP, which cannot be met in regular classes.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. Each student's IEP identifies goals that will lead to increased participation in and/or return to the regular class.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. Student placement is reviewed annually.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
9. For each student, there is a written transition plan for increased participation in the regular class and other regular education activities (e.g., recess, lunch, music class, etc.).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
10. The student-staff ratios in regular and special classes are based on individual student needs.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
11. No more than 12 students with severe handicaps are assigned to one special education teacher.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Integrated Delivery of Special Education and Related Services

Special education and related services cannot be confined to direct services offered by a specialist for a limited period of time each day or week. Special education and related services should be integrated throughout the student's day. Students should receive special education and related services from teachers (regular and special), teaching assistants, parents and other family members. Nonhandicapped peers may also participate in providing special education and related services when this is appropriate and can be done safely. Special educators and therapists should take on the role of training and consulting with others, as well as providing direct services. When direct services are provided, these services should occur in the environments where the skills will be used and therapy goals should be integrated into the student's IEP objectives and daily school, home and community activities.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for integrated delivery of special education and related services.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **Related service personnel participate in IEP development whenever students are in need of such services.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. **Special education and related services are provided in both consultative and direct formats, as needed and specified by IEPs.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. Special education and related services are provided in integrated settings (e.g., age-appropriate, regular classrooms; school hallways; gym; cafeteria; community settings; the student's home; etc.).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. Special educators and related service providers train other service providers, provide follow-up and regular monitoring of programs.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Parents and other family members have the opportunity for special education and related services consultation, training and follow-up to maximize the student's development outside the school.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. IEP objectives and specific educational programs indicate the integration of special education and related services goals into everyday classroom, school, home and community activities.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
8. Students are physically positioned according to their individualized needs throughout the school day and various instructional programs.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
9. Alternate, augmentative communication modes are developed for students who need them and their use is integrated into school, home and community activities.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
10. Therapeutic IEP objectives and specific educational programs emphasize active (rather than passive) participation by students in age-appropriate activities.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
11. Students are not required to participate in activities under conditions that would be embarrassing. Example: Some personal therapies such as catheterization, postural drainage and percussion, and stoma care, should be performed in private.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Social Integration

Students with severe handicaps should have access to the same environments as nonhandicapped peers of similar chronological age. The primary goals of social integration should be to increase social interaction between persons with and without handicaps and to increase the number of integrated school and community environments in which students with severe handicaps can participate. Approaches to increasing social interaction and participation should focus both on modifying the environment (e.g., teaching nonhandicapped peers and regular educators to interact with students with severe handicaps) and on teaching behaviors to the students that facilitate social interaction and participation.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for social integration.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **All students have regularly scheduled, structured opportunities to interact with age-appropriate peers and other community members within local school and community environments.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. **All student IEPs include objectives for increasing social skills in school and community environments. These objectives are implemented with specific instructional programs.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
4. All students are (50% of the time or more) in environments with age-appropriate nonhandicapped peers throughout the school day.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
5. All students attend age-appropriate, subject-area classes (e.g., music, art, library, home economics, physical education, etc.) with nonhandicapped peers.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. All students' IEPs include identification of participation in school-sponsored, extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports teams, clubs, dances, assemblies, graduation ceremony, etc.) with their nonhandicapped peers.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. Teachers (regular and special), school administrators and other school staff are trained to promote social integration and function as trainers/advocates with age-appropriate, nonhandicapped peers, other school staff and community members.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. Student transportation is based upon the individual needs of students and provides opportunities for social integration of students with and without handicaps.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Transition Planning

Students with severe handicaps require a longitudinal planning process, involving appropriate persons from current and future environments, in order to anticipate changes, prepare students for entry into new environments, prepare new environments and ensure successful transition from one environment to the next. Individualized Transition Plans are an integral part of each student's IEP. These plans should address moves from one chronologically age-appropriate environment to the next, from restrictive educational settings (a self-contained classroom) into less restrictive educational settings (regular classroom) and from school settings into postschool, adult environments.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for transition planning.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **For each student, Transition Plans are written and implemented a year or more in advance of each anticipated move from one educational environment to another.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. **For each student, 14 years old or older, a Transition Plan is written and implemented for transition to adult environments and services.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. The Transition Planning Team includes a) the student, b) the student's parents or guardian, c) the current teacher(s), d) representatives from the next environment(s), e) appropriate related services personnel, f) a district administrator, and g) relevant community service providers.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. The transition plan includes placement in paid employment in the last year of school unless the student is seeking further education.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Transition objectives are included in the student's IEP with a precise timetable for implementation and review.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. The Transition Plan is approved and signed by all team members, including the student's parents or guardians.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. Each student receives a document indicating completion of the formal educational program.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Functional, Longitudinal Curricular Expectations

The primary goal of public school education should be to prepare students for their adult roles within society. In order to achieve this goal for students with severe handicaps, curricular expectations and educational experiences from their entry into the educational system must be functional, cumulative and longitudinal in nature. Curricular expectations must reflect demands of likely future environments and of adult life. A functional curriculum will increase the number of age-appropriate, integrated current and future environments in which a student can participate and the student's independent participation in age-appropriate, integrated, current and future environments. Instruction in important life skills should begin far in advance of when the skills are needed. All domains of adult life (e.g., domestic/personal management, vocational/career education, and leisure/recreation skills) must be represented within curricular expectations. Curricular expectations must address important component skills (e.g., sensory/motor, functional academic, communication and social skills) by teaching functional skills, teaching alternative/augmentative strategies for developing partial participation. Behavioral excesses must be viewed as instructional/curricular needs, indicating areas where skills need to be taught.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for curricular expectations.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **Written district or program curriculum guidelines address all domains of adult life and critical skills for student participation in age-appropriate, integrated current and future environments.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. There is a policy and system that provide for extension of the school year as needed to meet curricular expectations for individual students.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. Written policy, procedures and student IEP objectives demonstrate that behavior excesses are viewed as instructional needs, indicating areas where skills for more appropriate behavior are not adequate and need to be taught.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. Written policies and procedures specify that student punishment and other intrusive strategies of behavior intervention are not used without review and written approval by program administrators and parents.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. A number of current and future, age-appropriate, integrated local school and community environments are identified and ranked in order of importance for each student (i.e., written environmental inventory).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
7. **Age-appropriate, current and future, school, home and community environments for each student are analyzed to determine the activities and skills required to function in those environments.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. IEP objectives selected for each student increase the number of age-appropriate current and future environments accessed by the student.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
9. IEP objectives selected for each student increase independent or partial participation in age-appropriate current and future environments.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
10. Settings, tasks and ~~materials~~ used to teach, maintain and generalize skills are selected to match those of age-appropriate current and future environments.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
11. All domains of adult life (domestic/personal management, vocational/career education, recreation/ leisure, communication/ social interaction) are represented within each student's IEP.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
12. Critical sensory/motor, functional academic, communication and social skills are included in each student's IEP, with application across all domains of adult life.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
13. IEP objectives for all students, 16 years old and older, include job training and placement in voluntary or paid work experiences.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
14. Student evaluations and assessments of present level of functioning are referenced to functional skills and activities rather than to IQ scores, mental age or norm-referenced achievement test scores.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
15. Physical and environmental factors which may contribute to behavior excesses are defined, observed and analyzed prior to implementing any behavior deceleration program.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
16. All behavior intervention programs emphasize increasing adaptive behavior, using positive consequences.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
17. Daily scheduled instructional activities include specific opportunities for students to make choices and provide input (e.g., student may choose materials to use for a task, student may choose where to sit, etc.).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
18. Students and staff use systems that allow students to engage in self-management and to anticipate the sequence of daily activities (e.g., personal schedules, self-monitoring checklists, staff explain changes in position or activity to students, etc.).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

There is a crucial need for students with severe handicaps to use acquired skills in home and community settings. The community to which skills are referenced and in which skills are taught and demonstrated must be the student's local community. Family members must be directly involved in selecting community-referenced objectives and training sites. Community-referenced instruction requires the environmental inventory of community settings to determine the individual student's skill needs. For a skill to be considered learned, it must be demonstrated in environments in which the skill is typically used.

Community-Referenced Instruction

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for community-referenced training.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **Conditions and criteria for goals and objectives in the IEP include performance in the home and in integrated local community environments.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. A systematic process is used to facilitate family involvement in the selection of community-referenced objectives and training sites.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
4. A systematic process is used to assist families to be directly involved in teaching and maintaining skills taught in the school program, in the home and in community environments.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
5. Students have the opportunity to acquire and demonstrate specific skills in local community settings outside of the school building on a regularly scheduled basis.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

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Systematic Data-Based Instruction

A major goal of instructional programs for students with severe handicaps is to teach them to respond to naturally occurring cues in natural environments. It cannot be assumed that learning will occur through exposure to an activity or environment. Therefore, educators must systematically plan instruction for acquisition, generalization and maintenance of skills and activities in school, home and community environments. Because many students with severe handicaps learn at an extremely slow rate, systematic data collection and analysis are necessary to determine the effectiveness of instruction and identify the need for changes. Students with severe handicaps are often provided instruction by a variety of individuals other than the special education teachers. Programs, therefore, must be clearly described in writing and the implementation of programs must be systematically managed and monitored.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for systematic data-based instruction.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **A current schedule of daily activities describing what students are doing, when, and who is available and accessible for each student.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. **Instructional objectives included in the IEP are written with a) specified conditions, b) observable and measurable behavior, and c) criteria, including criteria for generalization and maintenance.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. For each IEP objective currently being implemented there is an instructional plan available to instructional staff written in a format which allows for reliable implementation by regular and substitute staff delivering instruction.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. There is a systematic procedure for ongoing training and monitoring of paraprofessionals, peer tutors and volunteers who implement instructional programs that provides feedback on at least a weekly basis.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Data reflecting student progress are collected and reviewed at least weekly on all current IEP instructional programs.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. Changes are made in IEP instructional programs based upon data reflecting student progress.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. Behavior intervention programs are documented with written plans, and student progress data are monitored daily.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 00%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
9. There is regularly scheduled supervisory observation and feedback to staff regarding the reliability of program implementation, data collection and its use.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
10. Regularly scheduled multidisciplinary team meetings occur to evaluate student progress and make indicated changes.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
11. Instruction for each student occurs in a variety of groupings (i.e., including individual instruction, small and large group instruction, groups with students of similar needs, groups with students of different levels of handicapping conditions and groups with nonhandicapped peers).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
12. At least 80% of the school day for each student involves active participation in instructional activities directly related to IEP objectives.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
13. There is a system for monitoring longitudinal student progress which a) indicates level of independence on critical skills and activities of adult life, b) indicates environments in which critical skills and activities have been demonstrated, c) is summarized annually, and d) tracks students from entrance into school through graduation from high school.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Parents are highly significant participants in the development, implementation, and evaluation of their children's instructional programs. While the nature and extent of parent involvement will vary from family to family, educators must recognize the significance of the parents' roles. School personnel must establish and maintain ongoing communication with parents, provide information to assist families in gaining access to community resources, and share information through a mutually agreed-upon system of home-school communication.

Home-School Partnership

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item) This practice is in place for:	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for home-school.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **Parents are frequently encouraged to visit the classroom to interact with the teachers and school staff.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. **There is an established system for at least weekly parent/teacher communication between the school and home.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
4. **All families have the opportunity to participate in a parent interview or home and community environmental inventory process to determine educational needs of high priority.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
5. There is an established system for providing parents with information about available community resources (e.g., recreation programs, advocacy groups, respite care, etc.).	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Students' IEPs and written instructional programs reflect specific input from parents.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. Parents are provided with written, formal reports of student progress on the same schedule as nonhandicapped peers.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. A file of current information for each student, including a) medical records (e.g., health, hearing and vision), b) adaptive equipment and therapy prescriptions, c) medication prescriptions and specific procedures and directions regarding administering medications, d) medical/safety precautions (e.g., allergies, gag reflex, eats nonedibles, etc.) and e) emergency medical procedures, is maintained and is readily accessible to teachers.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
9. There is an established system for informing and educating parents of exemplary practices, rights and responsibilities for services to students with handicaps.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Local facilities housing regular educational programs for students should provide equal access and involvement for students with severe handicaps in age-appropriate settings. The school facility should not only be free of physical barriers but should create an environment that promotes integration for all students.

Barrier-Free Facilities

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item) This practice is in place for:	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for barrier-free facilities.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	_____
2. **Students have access to and use all age-appropriate school facilities (e.g., hallways, entrances and exits, regular classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, shop, home economics room, computer room, sports equipment, music equipment, library, health care facilities, etc.).**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	_____
3. **Classroom sites (regular or special) are determined on the basis of local school, age-appropriateness and availability of community training, and public transportation.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	_____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. Classroom sites (regular or special) have the following characteristics: a) normalized, age-appropriate decor; b) located in the main school building next to other classes for nonhandicapped peers of the same age; c) adequate space for individual and group instruction and needed special equipment; and d) appropriate lighting and acoustics.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. Schools have necessary adaptive equipment and facilities for personal care, mobility, age-appropriate leisure and play and vocational/career education activities.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. Restroom and personal care facilities provide safety and age-appropriate privacy for students and staff.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. Facilities provide safety for emergency situations: a) the classroom connects to office by phone/intercom, b) exits are easily accessible for all students and staff, and c) safety and emergency plans are developed and followed.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Personnel Development

Educational programs serving students with severe handicaps should employ the most qualified staff available and provide professional growth activities to ensure that staff continue to develop skills necessary to meet students' educational needs. Staff serving these students should develop and maintain the professional and personal skills necessary. Regular educators, special educators, related services personnel, paraprofessionals and other school staff must have appropriate ongoing education relevant to students with severe disabilities and relevant to working as a team to meet students' educational needs. The school district must provide supervision and staff development activities to promote high quality educational practices.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item)
This practice is in place for:

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for personnel development.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. **All educational personnel (i.e., administrators, teachers, related services, paraprofessionals) have certification, education, and experience relevant to the students they serve.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. **The district provides inservice education, at least annually, to all school board members, regular administrators, teachers and other school staff regarding the educational needs of students with severe handicaps.**	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. Supervision of instructional staff includes: a) using job descriptions describing duties specific to the assignment, b) supervisors who have education and experience relevant to high quality educational practices for TMR-eligible students, c) systematic needs assessment, d) individualized training goals and activities, and e) at least quarterly observation and feedback.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. Cooperation and collaboration among regular educators, special educators, and related services personnel are promoted through the following: a) special educators and regular educators participate in professional and extra-curricular activities together, b) special educators attend regular school faculty meetings, and c) planning time is provided for collaboration and team planning.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
6. All team members who work with certain individual students meet at least once per month to discuss progress and program changes.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. Paraprofessional staff are provided relevant, ongoing systematic training.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
8. Professional staff attend at least one regional or national professional conference each year.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
9. Each instructional staff member (paraprofessional and professional) attends at least four inservice workshop days each year.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
10. At least once each year, the program uses an outside consultant with recognized expertise to provide technical assistance or training.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
11. The program maintains a collaborative research, development and/or a training relationship with a college or university.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
12. The district provides funds for professional staff to complete at least one university course directly relevant to their instructional assignments each year.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Systematic Evaluation of Educational and Related Services

The educational programs serving students with severe handicaps need to be evaluated on a regular basis. The evaluation should include indicators of program quality as listed in these guidelines. The evaluation should address achievement of program goals; program effectiveness, including students' progress; discrepancies needing remediation; directions for future program change; program impact upon students with severe handicaps, their families and the community; and program impact upon nonhandicapped students. In addition to an annual internal review, there should also be a periodic external evaluation of the program conducted by parents, a representative from another education agency and one or more professionals with knowledge and expertise relevant to current best educational practice for students with severe handicaps.

Quality Guidelines Checklist (Check only one space for each item) This practice is in place for:	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
1. The LEA has a written policy for systematic evaluation of educational and related services.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
2. In addition to the IEP process and state compliance monitoring, there is a written plan and formal process for the annual review of educational programs provided to TMR-eligible students by the local school district.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. The annual review examines the extent to which school district goals and quality guidelines are achieved and the impact of educational and related services on students, their families, and the community.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

	All students/ staff 100%	Many students/ staff 75%	Some students/ staff 50%	Few students/ staff 25%	No students/ staff 0%	Don't know	Priority	Comments or Recommendations for Implementation
4. The annual review examines the impact of educationally and socially integrated delivery of special education and related services on nonhandicapped students.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
5. Local school district staff, instructional staff, parents and community members are involved in the annual review.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
6. The written results of the annual review, noting strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for change, are disseminated to parents, school district staff and appropriate community members.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
7. There is a written plan and formal process established for conducting a periodic outside evaluation by qualified professionals.	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____